

*1819

On March 17, 1841, Robert married Jane McKeown who had come to help in the home and had already become like one of the family. Since the other children had married and moved away, the father and the mother wished Robert and his young wife to live at their home and since Robert had done much to build it, perhaps it was partly his.

In 1844 this young couple heard some Mormon Missionaries and joined this new Church. He says that they went about a mile and one-half into the woods to find a suitable place to be baptized. The pond had ice about 18 inches thick on it, so a hole had to be cut to get to the water. Robert says that while under the water, though only a moment, a bright light shone around his head and it had a very mild heat. While unable to say, to describe the feeling he had, it had great influence on him for life. Study of the scripture, careful conduct and strict obedience to authorities of the Church followed this experience.

Shortly after joining the Church, he and a friend named James Park, decided to go to Nauvoo to see the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Apostles. They left on this 1000 mile round trip in 1845.

Those who travel by automobile, by rail and in the air will little realize the problems of travel 100 years ago. Robert Gardner took five dollars and a two bushel sack of crackers his wife and mother had made him which he carried on his back. At Port Sarne, he took a boat to Chicago, then traveled on foot to Nauvoo. A bed at night, when he could get one, cost him six cents. At Nauvoo he could not find a tavern or any place of entertainment. He and Park traveled around until long after bed time and finally got the privilege of sleeping on the carpet in a kindly home. Park had been there before and found a place the second day where he could work for his board. Robert went to the temple where work seemed to be abundant. One of the foremen, Mr. Hill, invited him to come to his home and sleep on a trundle bed and board with them. Robert accepted the bed but did not have the heart to do much eating when he saw how little food the family had.

Robert heard the Apostles and Prophet speak and became

acquainted with some of them. He talked with Brigham Young and in spite of the poverty of the saints wished to live among them. With this thought in mind he began his 500 mile return trip home. When he reached Chicago he had neither begged nor stolen, but his crackers and money were long since gone.

He boarded all the steamboats in the harbor to get a chance to work for his passage down the lake, but all refused until he came to the last one. He began feeling like praying in right good earnest then, but couldn't quite tell whether his faith was growing weaker or stronger.

The captain, when asked, said, "Yes, come on in the morning and pack wood with the Negroes." The next morning Robert came and carried the wood on two heavy sticks. There were two large negroes who changed off when one got tired but only one changed with Robert. This six weeks trip, however, was always a happy memory in the Scotchman's life.

Not long after that time the saints in Canada had word that the saints in Nauvoo were being driven west and were going to the Rocky Mountains. They were advised to leave soon if they wished to join the migration.

The Gardners had considerable property to dispose of so could not leave with the first company. While disposing of their property some unscrupulous men designed plans to swindle Archibald of some of his property or detain him in jail. He heard of the plan to arrest him and left that night for the border. He traveled forty miles on foot and by sunrise had reached the St. Clare river which is the boundary line of Canada and the United States. The river is one mile wide and had been frozen over but was now breaking up. The cakes of ice were quite close together out in the river but on both sides they seemed to drift from the shore. Things looked bad for Archibald for the sheriff and his men were drawing near; but he had faith still and ran for the river. As he reached the water a large cake of ice came down the river and struck the bank. He ran upon this and was able to step from one block of ice to another until he neared the American shore. Men in the little town of Black River saw him coming and ran down with poles to try to save him, but more floating ice spread out toward the shore and he was able to reach land. He waved good-bye to the sheriff on the opposite shore and started to Nauvoo.

Robert and the rest of the family rejoiced to know that Archibald was safe, but now had to see to the sale of his property and the care of his family.

There was no further attempt to leave Canada until the ferry was again crossing the river. When the family had gathered their household goods, ox-teams, wagons, and horses and

were ready to board the ferry for the American side, officers again came up to claim some of the horses, claiming them to be Archibald's property. At this time an old friend of the family, a lawyer named John Wilson, came to help them out. He made legal arrangements for their departure. It appears that he took some uncollected notes belonging to Archibald and Robert as a sort of bond. As it afterwards proved they were left in good care.

This was the rainy season and travel was very difficult. The saints had already been driven out from Nauvoo when the Gardners reached there and the temple had been destroyed. However, they overtook Orson Hyde's company, camped near the Missouri River and there saw some of the suffering of the saints.

A boat had been built by the Saints to help them cross the River. When William put his team and wagon on the boat one yoke of wild steer jumped into the river and started back to shore. William then jumped in, took hold of the steers tails, turned them around, and made them face the opposite shore and swim across.

At the Horne River there was no boat, so the men made a raft and for a time pulled the raft back and forth with a rope by hand. This was heavy work so ox-teams were tried. Robert's wagon was the first to be taken by team. For some reason the oxen started too soon and before the wagon was blocked. The front end of the raft tipped up, the wagon rolled back dangerously near the edge and had almost rolled into the river with wife and children when Robert grabbed a hind wheel and held the wagon until it reached the opposite shore. "God helped us and we were saved," he said. It does seem remarkable that one man could have done such a feat.

Many other important events, some of them pathetic, are given in the sketches of his wives, which also appear in this volume.

On reaching Salt Lake Valley, he and his brother Archibald made plans for building a saw mill. One of the first to be successful was built on Mill Creek by their father and William and themselves.

Soon after building the mill, one winter when the snow lay very deep in the canyons, Robert went up to slide some logs from the mountain. The slide was very narrow and steep. Without his knowing it, some one else had gone up and started sliding logs down. As Robert was part way up a log shot down like an arrow and struck his leg below the knee. While it did not break the leg, the wound was deep and serious.

His first thought was to get out of the slide before another

log killed him. When out of danger, he said, "Now I can't go on my mission in the spring." But on examining his leg and seeing that it was not broken, he said, "Alright, I will go on my mission."

From his position on the side of the mountain he could see the road in the canyon below where two men were coming up. He called to them and to his great relief they heard him. On reaching the injured man they saw the need for haste to town. The first problem was to get him to the road and their sleds. They did this by taking hold of the good leg and dragging him down the slide, a quick way but one that wore out the seat of his pants and also wore off considerable skin. In addition it filled his pants and shirt with snow.

When he had somewhat recovered, his many friends in Mill Creek were anxious to show him kindness and sympathy. One way they tried of making life pleasant was to give many parties, where he was a special guest. He was grateful for their kindness and often expressed his good will. On three occasions he, jokingly blessed the hostesses with twins. He had quite forgotten the incident until he returned from his mission to find that each of the women actually had twins. Since the women believed that his blessing was effectual he was cautious from then on.

On April 22, 1857, Robert left his home on Mill Creek to go on his Hand Cart Mission. There were 75 men in the company from 21 to 65 years of age, including Americans, Scotch, Irish, Dutch, Danish, Welsh, French, and English.

There was a cart for every three men, John Berry, Robert Gardner, and David Brinton traveling together. Since there were no teams to haul bedding or provisions, the cart had to haul everything necessary for the journey.

The first night was spent in Salt Lake City. The next morning they marched out to the tune of a brass band which accompanied for two miles. At that point Robert took a last farewell of his Sister Mary, who died before his return.

Robert had not recovered from his injury and still looked very pale and weak. One man on the side lines pointed to him and said, "That man won't go far before dropping out."

The company had wet cold traveling for several hundred miles. On the mountain divide the snow was fifteen feet deep. Often it rained. Some times it snowed; but neither snow, frost nor rain delayed this brave company. In 48 days they had traveled one thousand and thirty miles, almost 22 miles each day of travel.

The X.Y. Company which was organized to carry mail across the plains, started with a band of horses and good outfit on the same day as the hand cart company. They tried to overtake the

latter company, but did not succeed until June 2nd, and only then by sending two men, Charles Shumway and John Wimmer ahead on a forced march, traveling most of the night.

The men reached their destination in better health than when they started. The journey across the plains was less difficult than the trip west. There was much game along the way including many Buffalo along the rivers. Sometimes there were droves several miles long and two miles wide.

On reaching the Missouri River the hand carts were sold. Elders Shumway and Gardner made their way toward Canada and were soon at the St. Clare river where Robert had crossed in 1846.

One night while in Canada, Elder Gardner dreamed that as he approached the home of the branch president, his family all came running out to meet the Elders. One member of the family had a yellow envelope in his hand.

Elder Gardner told this dream to his companion. A few days later when they approached London, the dream was fulfilled. The saints to whose home they were going came running out to meet the Elders saying, "You are called home." They carried in their hands the telegram with this message.

While in Canada, Robert's old friend, John Wilson, delivered the money for all the notes, for he had collected them all. This money helped Elder Gardner and his missionary companions to return home.

All went well on the return trip except their crossing of the Bear River. As they approached Fort Bridger, they were advised that Johnson's Army was stationed there and that they should avoid them by crossing the Bear River and going down Weber Canyon.

The missionaries found the river deep and wide. Since it could not be forded they made a boat from the wagon boxes. Some men swam the river to take the ropes across. The wet ropes together with the swift stream, sank the box boat. James Andrews, who could not swim, was on the boat when it sank. He floated off on the current of the stream. Men swam toward him but he was being carried down stream faster than they could swim. George Metcalf and another man on the far side, ran down the river to a bend where they thought Andrews might strike the bank. Metcalf threw himself forward to reach as far in the stream as possible, while the other man held to his legs. At this moment Andrews passed and Metcalf grabbed him by the hair of the head, and brought him out as dead, but he soon recovered.

After returning to Salt Lake from his Canadian mission, Robert Gardner prospered. He was just considering his bless-

ings and thought of taking life a little easier. His had been a hard one almost every day since leaving Scouland thirty-nine years before. He said to himself, "I have been well off before and my property all went. I am almost afraid of another fall."

In a few hours, sure enough, news came of another fall as far as property was concerned. A neighbor reported that he had heard Mr. Gardner's name read with a list of others who were to make a new settlement in the southern part of the state and to grow cotton. The men were asked to be ready for this mission very soon.

Since coming to Salt Lake, Robert had married Cynthia Berry, on August 5, 1851, and Mary Ann Carr on July 20, 1856. His first wife, Jane had nine children. Cynthia had five and Mary Ann had two, one of them born in February, the year of his call.

Robert thought of the hardships his families had endured and those they would have to endure on this new mission. He then thought of his conversion, his baptism, and his acquaintance with the Prophet. He looked and spat, took off his hat, scratched his head and said, "Alright."

Robert went at once to see George A. Smith in Salt Lake, who laughed and said, "I put your name on the list. If you don't want to go, see President Young and he will take it off."

"I expected he would, but I shan't try," Robert answered. "I came to see what kind of an outfit I needed and when to go."

There was but vague information to be given at this time about the new location of this cotton growing mission but preparation for the departure began immediately and on November 12, 1861, Robert with his young wife, Mary Ann, their two daughters, Ann and Laura, in company with William Lang and his wife, left on this uncertain and difficult mission. The oldest son, William, had been left in charge of affairs in Salt Lake, while John A., Cynthia's oldest son who was nine years of age was taken along to help Mary Ann with the young children.

When Brothers Gardner and Lang reached Parowan they met George A. Smith with a little more definite information. He told them to go to the Junction of the Virgin and the Santa Clara rivers and build a city which was to be called St. George. After locating the families, Brother Smith wanted Robert to explore the country for timber and suitable places for saw mills.

A few days after leaving Parowan the missionaries reached Washington, near their destination.

We all have some tender spots, for each of us there are some things we can not endure. Others might endure with ease what is beyond our power to bear. Robert approached this crucial test in Washington.

The Canadian forests were wild and fierce; the swamps were deep and cold. The thistles were sharp and piercing; the road to Nauvoo was long and lonely; the prairies were wide and the rivers were deep; the mountain stream were swift and icy. He cleared the forests and drained the swamps. With his bag of crackers on his back he walked and walked. He swam the rivers; he waded the icy mountain streams. He did these things unafraid and uncomplainingly.

But when he met some of his old friends in Washington, other missionaries to this new and desolate land, Robert was afraid. The appearance of these friends was disheartening indeed, for nearly all of them had Malaria. They had worked hard in this country and had worn out their clothes and had replaced them from cotton they had grown on their own lots and farms. The women had carded, spun, woven by hand and colored this cloth with weed dyes. The men, women and children were clothed from the same piece of cloth which, in color, matched the sickly blue of their faces.

Robert looked at his charming and beautifully dressed young wife and to the two children still fresh and dainty. He thought of the time when the terrible stamp of sun and sickness and fever might be placed upon them. He said that this experience tried him more than anything in all his long Mormon experiences. But he looked away to the red hills, the black ridge and the muddy river. He spat on the dry road, took off his hat, scratched his head, "We will trust in God and go on."

God was good to Robert Gardner and to his posterity. He lived his old age in a beautiful valley sheltered by high mountains and tall pines, Pine Valley. He died February 3, 1906.

He had had but a few short weeks of formal education, but he grew wise through rich experiences and association with great men.

After his death a monument was erected to the honor of his father and the three sons: William, Archibald, and Robert. It stands on the site of their mill on Mill Creek. The permit to erect the mill was the first authorized for an industrial enterprise outside the old fort built by the first pioneers and carried with it the first industrial water right ever issued in Utah.

Robert's activities extended to many fields beyond colonizing and building mills. A recent County Recorder of Washington County recently said: "The records made by Robert Gardner while surveyor and later while mayor of St. George were the most accurate of any records found in the files of the County. Dates especially were remarkably correct."

His four wives were: Jane McKeown, Cynthia Lovina Berry, Mary Ann Carr, and Leonora Cannon.

CHAPTER VII

JANE McKEOWN GARDNER

Jane McKeown Gardner was born in Canada on July 24, 1823. She was married to Robert Gardner, March 17, 1841. She went to live in the home of Robert's parents, since she had worked in the home and his parents wished them to live there. Robert had helped build the home and clear the farm and perhaps rightfully owned a share in the home.

The young couple started out with vigor and planned to reap a good harvest that year but Robert came down with Malaria Fever and could do little work the entire summer. Jane carried on a great deal of the work. Since there were no stores near where clothing could be bought, she and Robert's mother cleaned and carded the wool and made it into clothing for the family, both men and women.

During her husband's sickness this seemed a hard way to make a living and start out in life but the young couple were not discouraged.

Her first child, Robert Rierson, was born at Warwick on December 31, 1841. Their next child, Mary Jane, was born on February 13, 1843. The next girl, born at the same place, was Margaret on September 11, 1844.

In January of 1845, she and her husband were baptised in the icy water of a pond about a mile and a half from the house and were confirmed members of the "Mormon" Church.

After a while their mother was taken very ill and was not expected to live. She wished to be baptised. The neighbors heard of this request and said if she were put in the water they would have Robert and his father tried for murder for that would surely kill her. However, they put Mrs. Gardner on a sled and hauled her two miles through the ice and baptised her in the presence of as many as came to see her die. One man declared if she did not die that night he would be a Mormon next day, but next day he met her near the same place where he made the statement as she was on her way on foot going to her daughter's. He looked at her, gave her a nod, gazed at her as if he had seen a ghost, but never spoke, nor ever joined the Church.

When Mrs. Gardner was taken home after baptism and taken out of her wet clothes she was quite well.

The following winter, word came from Nauvoo that the saints were being driven out and would leave for the Rocky Mountains and if the Canadian members wished to travel with them,

there was no time to lose. The Gardners received this message with thankful hearts, and went to work to dispose of their property as best they could and fit themselves out for a 1,600 mile journey.

After traveling for many weeks and more than five hundred miles in fond anticipation of joining the saints, Jane and her husband overtook them at Orson Hyde's camp in Iowa, near the Missouri River.

Here she began to see some of the suffering of the saints. The first night a terrible rain storm with thunder, lightning and wind came upon the camp. The next morning it was painful to see the Saints with their tents blown down and covers torn from the wagons and women and little children soaked. One tent had covered a sick woman with a young baby and her children who were ill with Malaria Fever.

In June, a company was organized to start for Salt Lake. The Gardners joined it and the travel was quite pleasant at first. But one evening after camp was made, Jane's fourth child, William, was born. The journey ahead was so long and continued travel so important, the march was continued the next day. Neither birth nor death could interrupt their progress. A bed in the back of the wagon was made as comfortable as conditions would permit. The two little girls stayed with her in the back of the wagon while Robert sat by his father and helped with the ox team.

One day the long wagon train stopped to repair a bridge. Jane's husband got down from his wagon to go and help. As he left the ox team, they turned to one side to pick grass. Young Robert who was six years old and a very careful boy, started to get down from the wagon to go to the head of the team and keep them from moving off the road while the father helped. As the boy stepped down, one of the oxen kicked him and threw him under the wheel and started on. The wagon ran over the boy, seriously injuring him. Jane had the young baby to care for so her husband held the boy in his lap while driving the team. That evening little Robert got down from the wagon, ran around and played to try to show his parents that he was not much hurt. But he soon got back into the wagon and never got out again without help.

Jane cared for the baby, William, looked after the two little girls and watched her husband hold Robert for a journey of five hundred miles. Each day he grew thinner and more pale. Every few days Robert's father shook with the Fever so that he could hardly hold the boy and manage the team. But since the jolt of the wagon pained the sick child the father continued to hold him, to in some measure relieve the suffering.

One night while this little family camped on the banks of the Platt River the pain ceased and the little boy was very quiet and still. He was dead.

While the prairie wolves howled in the distance; in the light of a dim campfire, Jane saw her oldest son laid in a shallow grave on the banks of the river. The river moved on in silence; the wagon train moved on and time moved on. So much had happened since her marriage in 1841, and now so much had been left behind.

Time is both kind and cruel; perhaps one kindness was to conceal both hardships and pleasures of Jane's future. The next heavy trouble that came was to have William fall from the wagon. It seems that one of the young girls was holding him in front of the wagon, when a sudden jolt threw the girl forward and in catching herself, lost control of the baby. He fell in such a way that two wheels of the wagon ran over his ankles. The father picked him up and called for the elders who administered to him. In a few days the baby had quite recovered. This always seemed a miracle to Jane, since the wagon was heavily loaded. To get an idea of the weight of the wagon, Robert placed some Buffalo bones under the same two wheels and they were crushed to powder.

With many other difficulties, the family made its way over the mountains, across rivers and through two rough canyons into the Salt Lake Valley on October 1, 1847. They drove down to what was later called the Old Fort in the North-West section of the present site of Salt Lake City. The winter was very mild with little rain or snow all that season. In the spring, Mr. Gardner and his brother planted about six acres of grain near Mill Creek, about six miles south of the City. The land was so dry that little came up. Huge crickets ate that up as fast as it came from the ground.

Soon Jane and her family went on half rations. From half to quarter rations soon followed. Jane spent hours every day gathering weeds and sego roots. Thistles with a spoonful of corn meal was a common diet. Some days she walked almost a mile to get a small bucket of skimmed milk. She dreaded the time when her children would cry for bread and there would be none to give them. But the time never came. They never complained and kept in good health, though at times the entire family seemed to be losing strength.

The sego roots seemed very nourishing and were more plentiful that year than at any time since. Whether this was a divine gift as was the Manna of old or whether the excessive use that year of the cultivation of the land by the settlers made the change may not be known.

After that first hard year, conditions of life were much more pleasant and from that time the family prospered in Salt Lake. Just when they were beginning to feel that they were to be comfortably settled for life, Mr. Gardner was called by President Brigham Young to move with his families to settle in St. George. This was in 1861 and Robert left for the South on November 12, with his wife Mary Ann. Robert returned to Salt Lake in 1863 and on November 13 of that year he took Jane and his other wife, Cynthia, to their new home in Southern Utah. They stayed in St. George for the remainder of the winter and moved to the new home in Pine Valley in the early spring.

She spent the remainder of her life quietly, happily, and usefully in this beautiful little valley. She served as a Relief Society counselor for several years. Her family were all useful and prominent. Four of her sons went on missions. William spent ten years on three missions in New Zealand. Two of her sons, William and James, served in the bishopric for several years. All of her sons were strict observers of the word of wisdom. The daughters of equal high moral, spiritual, and social quality.

Her children were: Robert R., Mary Jane, Margaret, Jane Calender, William, Sarah, Elizabeth, James, Thomas, Reuben, and Hyrum Osro.